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THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 90

NO. 6

SUMMER 2005

FOUNDED 1917

Help Make Eastshore State Park a Wildlife Paradise

Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help shape and build public support for an exciting new park. Become a Golden Gate Audubon docent and lead nature walks through the Eastshore State Park, or take part in a year-long bird census of the park.

Beginning this fall, Golden Gate Audubon will launch a program of regularly scheduled nature walks and a year-long bird census. Training classes for both docents and census counters will begin in September, with the walks and count set to start in October. Our classes will teach you about the park and its present and potential wildlife habitat value. You can then share your knowledge with others by leading regularly scheduled nature walks or by taking part in the bird census. If you want, you can do both—lead nature walks and count birds!

The new Eastshore State Park may be the biggest secret in the East Bay. Extending eight and a half miles along the shoreline from the Emeryville Crescent north to Marina Bay in Richmond, the park's 2,262 acres contain 1,897 acres of tidelands and 365 acres of uplands.

The tidelands are some of the richest waterbird habitat in the Bay Area. At both the Emeryville Crescent and Albany mudflats, shorebird counts reach as high as 14,000 in one sighting, in addition to the thousands of waterfowl that keep them company. These two sites offer unparalleled opportunities for nature viewing and interpretation.

The park's uplands consist of old landfill material and, for the most part, are weed infested, with few native plants. While currently providing nesting habitat for pairs of Northern Harriers and White-tailed Kites and a home for a significant number of other land birds, the uplands rate far below their potential to offer habitat for birds and other native wildlife.



Great Egret patrolling the shoreline of Eastshore State Park.

Charles Denson

EASTSHORE STATE PARK, continued on page 4

Golden Gate Park's New North Lake

Over the past two years, one of San Francisco's favorite birding sites, North Lake in Golden Gate Park, has undergone a major renovation.

When North Lake was created in 1899 as part of the Cham of Lakes, it included six small islands connected by a rustic footbridge. The islands were planted with Swamp Cypress, Weeping Willow, alder, and bamboo to give them unique character. John McLaren, the park's designer and superintendent, said, "When the foliage becomes more abundant and the grass begins to grow, this will be the prettiest section of the park. It has been our object all along to avoid anything that would tend to destroy the illusion of nature. No harsh palms or stiff groupings will be permitted around the lakes and everything will be done to enhance the natural beauty of the surroundings."

When I moved to San Francisco in the early 1970s and discovered North Lake, I was amazed to find such a wild-looking area in a city park. Tules lined the lake edges, and the islands had groves of cypress and willow. I spotted a Belted Kingfisher and watched my lifer Virginia Rail swim out of some tules, followed immediately by my lifer Sora. But the North Lake event that changed me from a casual bird-watcher to a birder was spotting a Brown Thrasher along the trail.

Over the next decade, however, North Lake radically changed. In 1980, park historian

NEW NORTH LAKE, continued on page 3

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ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. Monthly meeting, second Friday in the West Bay, third Thursday in the East Bay, 7 p.m.

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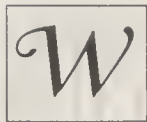
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Golden Gate Audubon Launches New Website



We are delighted to announce the new Golden Gate Audubon Website, which will be launched by July 1. Check it out! The colorful new site, with our same address—www.goldengateaudubon.org—will feature an easy-to-use format with beautiful "bird" buttons that take you immediately where you want to go with a single click. You will find listings of current field trips, information on our conservation projects and committees, environmental education and Eco-Oakland program, upcoming classes, and more. Our home page will highlight "Alerts and Events" that advise you how to respond to our latest issues of concern, as well as inform you of our upcoming events.

If you are not a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you can join online by filling out and emailing us a simple form. You can also make a donation. You can learn about the many ways to "Get Involved" in Golden Gate Audubon and make direct contact with leaders of our diverse activities.

Our conservation projects are divided into three categories that define the scope of our work: Wetlands and Wildlands, Birds at Risk, and Making the City Safe for Wildlife. Under each of these, you will find descriptions, history, and goals of the many projects we are working on, from Pier 94 and the Presidio in San Francisco to the Alameda Wildlife Refuge and Eastshore State Park in the East Bay.

No website can hold its own without good photos, and ours stands up with the best. Thanks to some of our own expert member photographers, we have outstanding closeups of birds and other wildlife, as well as of individuals of all ages on field trips, volunteer work parties, and other Golden Gate Audubon activities.

Perhaps the best news is that we promise the new website will be kept up to date. So bookmark the site and let us know how you like it. We welcome your comments—you can send them to us online.

New Grants Fund Golden Gate Audubon Programs

This issue of *The Gull* highlights a wealth of exciting new opportunities for Golden Gate Audubon members. Many are made possible by grants we have received from foundations and individuals in our community.

The upcoming bird census and nature walks in the Eastshore State Park, described on page 1, will be funded by a generous grant from an anonymous individual, which will be matched by a new grant from The California State Parks Foundation.

Critical support through a prior grant from The San Francisco Foundation is allowing us to update our technology so we can better serve our members. This summer, as noted above, we will launch our brand-new website. Also thanks to The San Francisco Foundation, we have acquired a new database system to manage our member and volunteer information. (Please bear with us as we break in our new database: If you receive duplicate mailings or if you fail to receive the mailings you should, please contact our office so we can correct errors in our new database.)

Finally, we are delighted to announce that Golden Gate Audubon has received a grant from The Dean Witter Foundation to build our member and volunteer programs. The funds will enhance our ability to engage new volunteers in projects ranging from bird censuses to education programs to habitat restoration efforts for California Quail, Least Terns, and other local wildlife.

by Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director

Raymond H. Clary wrote in *Golden Gate Park, The Early Years*, "All the footbridges are gone. The islands are indistinguishable from one another and the lakes are full of trash, brush, tules and weeds. The Chain of Lakes today is a scene of desolation and neglect."

North Lake's old clay bottom was leaking thousands of gallons of water, but the city's attempt to stop the leak with a synthetic liner was unsuccessful. Shortly after its installation, parts of black material could be seen flapping along the shore. The city then built a levy that cut the lake in two, greatly reducing its value to waterfowl. The water itself was eutrophic—clogged with aquatic plants and depleted of oxygen—which further reduced its wildlife value. Non-native turtles competed with the native Western Pond Turtles. The feeding of ducks by park visitors added to the damage.

By the mid-1980s, the lake's ecosystem had pretty much crashed. Although the lake looked wild, little wildlife could be found. Much of the shore and slopes leading to the lake were bare of vegetation. In other places, dense mats of non-native plants crowded out the understory.

When the 1998 Golden Gate Park Master Plan was passed, restoration of North Lake became a primary focus. Because of the presence of Western Pond Turtles (a designated species of special concern), nesting raptors, and migratory birds, the California Department of Fish and Game requested that the city prepare a wildlife management plan. I was asked to comment on the plan on behalf of Golden Gate Audubon.

Making North Lake functional again was an enormous undertaking. First, the habitat in the park's other lakes had to be improved to mitigate

for the temporary loss of North Lake. As the lake was slowly drained, crews netted all the fish and turtles. The Western Pond Turtles were relocated to other suitable sites in the park. Since many of the trees around the lake were at the end of their life spans, there was concern that trees falling in the new lake would punch through the new clay liner. But due to a public outcry against cutting the trees, fewer were removed than initially proposed. This, unfortunately, will reduce the effectiveness of new bird habitat planted around the lake.

Bulldozers then excavated the drained lake considerably deeper in order to improve water quality and prevent tule growth from encroaching into the center. But creating a deeper lake resulted in a steeper bank, causing concern about erosion. A rock-lined edge, the least intrusive solution, was chosen. The most troubling aspect of this feature was that many of the old willows

along the bank, some of the best bird habitat, had to be removed.

Around the lake, the old path was upgraded and leveled. The sorry old footbridge was rebuilt and a beautiful, cascading rock spillway replaced the crude pipe at the south end. New "Do Not Feed" signs were installed to help maintain water quality and protect the lake's biodiversity. No other landscape project in San Francisco can boast so many plantings done specifically to attract birds. Among the trees are oak, alder, willow, Toyon, Wax Myrtle, and California Buckeye. Shrubs include lupine, sage, buddleia, Flowering Currant, and Coffeeberry. Coast Buckwheat, Seaside Daisy, Sticky Monkeyflower, and Evening Primrose, as well as bunchgrasses, round out the perennials.

Although most of these plants have been in the ground just over a year, bird life has improved. Six species of swallow are feeding over the lake. Wilson's Warblers have nested in the area, and Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, and Red-necked Phalarope have made appearances. Diving ducks, previously uncommon on the lake, are now a regular winter feature.

While North Lake shows signs of a spectacular rebirth, it is not perfect. The absence of willows at the moment is a great loss. The islands lack a robust understory. Not all the invasive plants have been removed and will encroach into newly planted areas. And contrary to John McLaren's plan, many of the plants were arranged in unnatural "stiff groupings." But I believe, as McLaren did a century ago, that "When the foliage becomes more abundant and the grass begins to grow, this will be the prettiest [and, I add, the birdiest] section of the park."

by Alan Hopkins
Member, San Francisco
Conservation Committee



Golden Gate Park's North Lake in 2002 before renovation (top) and the lake today.

Approximately 158 acres of the park's uplands are designated as "conservation areas" and 91 acres as "preservation areas," which means they provide an opportunity to re-create an example of the natural bay shoreline that has mostly disappeared. With appropriate restoration and planting, we can expand habitats for birds, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals and create displays of wildflowers.

A small preview of what can be done is already taking place on 17 acres of the Berkeley Meadow. After earth moving by the California State Parks Department to increase seasonal wetlands in the meadow, birders were thrilled this past winter to see many more birds in the pools. Significant native plantings in the meadow will create pristine coastal scrub and coastal prairie habitat for plant and bird species now rarely seen in the Bay Area. A Loggerhead Shrike, a species absent from the area for many years, was observed on the restored site almost as soon as the work was completed.

The Berkeley Meadow is designated as a "preservation area" and is thus protected from human intrusion, much to the benefit of ground-nesting birds such as the Northern Harrier and White-tailed Kite. Many other upland acres, however, such as the Albany Neck and Bulb and parts of the Albany Plateau, are "conservation areas."

This means that wildlife-compatible human recreation, such as picnicking, hiking, and nature viewing, will be encouraged. Here is where families will be able to watch a Song Sparrow or a Kestrel, a Western Fence Lizard or a rabbit, and introduce their children to the world of nature.

The park holds amazing promise for the future, but it will take years of habitat restoration—and funding to support the restoration—to reach the park's full potential. Active, dedicated park supporters are essential for what needs to be done. Our program will begin to develop that support by bringing people to the park.

We have a big job ahead of us, but thanks to generous grants from the California State Parks Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation's Donor Advised Fund, and with the help of our partner organizations, Citizens for Eastshore Parks and the Shorebird Park Nature Center—and you—we can do it!

We need your help to make this a success. Please become a docent or a census counter. Come out to enjoy, and introduce your neighbors to, our new state park. For more information, call the Golden Gate Audubon office, 510.843.2222. We look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you in the park.

by Arthur Feinstein
Conservation Director

World Environment Day Comes to San Francisco

As committed environmentalists, GGA members will not want to miss attending some of the fascinating events at World Environment Day 2005 in San Francisco from Wednesday, June 1, through Sunday, June 5. Dozens of activities will be offered at various locales throughout the city: workshops, tours, a Green Cities Expo, art events, and films at the Castro Theater. Topics range from understanding greenhouse gases and global warming to sustainable buildings and sustainable cuisine.

The Green Cities Expo at Fort Mason spans five days, with each day focused on a specific theme. On Wednesday, the Environmental Non-Profit Network will host a reception for nonprofit organizations, featuring keynote speaker Julia Butterfly Hill, at the Fort Mason Festival Pavilion. On Friday, a Nature in the City Symposium will address the importance of nature in urban centers and how to protect and restore natural habitats.

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and has been held every year since in a different city throughout the world. For more information, visit www.wed2005.org.

Introductory Bird Walk in East Bay

Robbie Fisher will give a fun and informative introductory birding tour in the Berkeley Hills on Saturday, June 11, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Fisher has led field trips for 10 years and has seen more than 650 species in North America. She is currently the treasurer/membership chair for Western Field Ornithologists. The \$25 fee includes continental breakfast. Class size is limited. Preregister by phoning 510.525.6155.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

Peregrine Falcon (\$500 to \$999)

Anne & Boyard Rowe

Least Tern (\$200 to \$499)

Bob Bennett & Elizabeth Shih, Terry Coddington, Mr. & Mrs. Miles McKey, Linda & Randy Swanson
Northern California Bird Box

Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$199)

George F. Bing, Barbara C. Bottarini, William D. Grasse, Virginia W. Havens, Sandra La Framboise & Michael Marken, Fred Lindeman, Leonard Schwab & Rita Brenner, Deborah W. Trotter, Stephen Waldman

Gifts (to \$99)

Charlotte F. Klock, Marian Whitehead, Jane Whitley, Barton J. Clark, Nina Steidl, Marshall Hasbrouck, Sandra Kaplan Gilford, Kathy & John Compagno.

John De Becker, John V. Sudall, Leroy Ortopan, Hugh Visser, Lee Karney, Rudy Pipa, Joelle Buffa & Clyde Morris

In Memory of

Morgan Harris: *James Rothenberg & Mariana Woldfuhr*

Gift Memberships for:

Christopher Valle-Riestra: *Edith Valle-Riestra*

In Kind

Presentation Board: *Ron Barklow & Viola Sanna-Barklow*

Grants

The Dean Witter Foundation: *Member/Volunteer Development*

Maynard P. & Katherine Z. Buehler Foundation Fund (East Bay Community Foundation): *Gateway Valley*

The San Francisco Foundation (Donor Advised Fund): *Eastshore State Park and Alameda Refuge*

Weeden Foundation: *Alameda Refuge*

Fall Birding Classes in San Francisco

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan, and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, will start September 13, 14, and 15. All classes meet from 7 to 9:15 p.m. in room 307 at the Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay Street on the east side of the building. The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends.

Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is *A Field Guide to Birds of North America*, fourth edition, by the National Geographic Society. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* is recommended as an adjunct text for Ornithology II and III. Please bring field guides, as well as binoculars, to class if you have them.

Fees are \$130 for each seven-week course, and \$115 for EA115, EA120, and EA125, which are six weeks each. Preregistration is strongly advised. For further information, call 415.561.1860 or visit the instructor's web site at <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/>. You may register online at www.evolveu.com/cc.ccsf/. Registration for the fall begins July 1.

Birds of the Sierra Nevada

San Francisco State University is offering three classes of interest to birders at its Sierra Nevada Field Campus.

Birdwatching in the Sierra Nevada, June 20–24, focuses on locating and identifying birds using both sight and song and on learning about the habitats and seasonal cycles of the species observed. Other aspects of local natural history, such as weather patterns, geology, and wildflowers, are also covered. Most of the time will be spent in the field in the vicinity of the field campus, including the Great Basin desert and the Sierra Valley, known for its wetlands. The class is taught by David Lukas, who leads trips throughout the West.

Birds of the Sierra Nevada, taught by Dave Shuford, will be held June 27–July 1. This introductory-level field biology course concentrates on nesting birds of the north-

ern Sierra Nevada. Identification, natural history, ecology, adaptations, and other subjects will be taught in the field during the day and in lectures and discussions in the evening. Shuford is a full-time ornithologist with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory. He has recently published a book on the nesting birds of Marin County.

Field Ornithology I. Introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior. Tuesdays. Part A (EA101) starts September 13 and ends October 25. Part B (EA105) begins November 1 and ends December 13.

Field Ornithology II. In-depth study of the identification and status of North American waterbirds, including loons, grebes, tubenoses, and pelicans. Wednesdays. Part A (EA110) starts September 14 and ends October 26. Part B (EA115) starts November 2 and ends December 14.

Field Ornithology III. Continuing study of North American land birds including pigeons, parrots, cuckoos, owls, and nightjars. Thursdays. Part A (EA120) starts September 15 and ends October 26. Part B (EA125) starts November 3 and ends December 15.

Sierran Bird Banding, in two sections, July 17–22 and July 24–29, is an introduction to the skills involved in bird banding, from setting up mist nets to recording data on the species captured and banding birds. Instructors are Jim Steele and Mac McCormick of the Sierra Nevada Field Campus, which has been monitoring birds in the Sierras for the U.S. Forest Service for eight years.

For more details and registration information, go to www.sfsu.edu/~sierra.

Birding in Panama

Exploring the forests around the Panama Canal and visiting the Canopy Tower in Soberania National Park are among the highlights of the March 2006 field trip to Panama organized by Steve Margolin. Participants can expect to see a broad range of species in tropical forests, wetlands, and other habitats. Guide will be Guido Berguido, an experienced birding guide and a member of Panama Audubon Society. The group will be limited to 10 participants. This trip is not for listers, who would be better served by a commercial birding trip. The goal is to enjoy the birds encountered in diverse tropical habitats rather than target particular species. The trip is in the early planning stages. For more information, contact Steve Margolin at 530.342.6476.

Wanted: Energetic Volunteer to Plan Speaker Series

Golden Gate Audubon is seeking a volunteer to organize our monthly speaker series in the East Bay and San Francisco. The programs feature speakers who give slide-illustrated talks on a wide variety of topics, from birding adventures in exotic parts of the globe to Bay Area birds and conservation issues.

The position entails contacting potential speakers, scheduling appearances, introducing programs, and ensuring that arrangements are set up properly. The East Bay programs are held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month in Berkeley, the San Francisco programs at 7 p.m. on the second Friday (except June, July, August, and December).

If you are interested in this fascinating and rewarding assignment, contact Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director, at 510.843.9912, or send an e-mail to volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org.

FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Hayward Regional Shoreline

Alameda County

Saturday, June 4

Leader: Pamela Llewellyn, 510.843.7904, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Hayward shoreline Interpretive Center for this very special trip focusing on nesting birds in shoreline marsh. Species include Black Skimmer, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, and a variety of ducks. Special guest Peter Dramer will join us and share history of marsh and birds that depend on it. Registration is limited to 20 participants. Please call or email if you plan on attending.

Take Hwy. 92 west and exit at Clawiter. Cross Clawiter, turn left onto Breakwater, and go to end where you will see Interpretive Center and parking.

Birding for Children

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturdays, June 4, July 2, and August 6

Leaders: Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, San Francisco Nature Education, and Darin Dawson, San Francisco Botanical Garden docent, 415.387.9160, www.sfnature.org

Meet at 10 a.m. for this first Saturday of the month trip at kiosk/bookstore near main gate of San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, Ninth Ave. at Lincoln Way. This birding tour and nature hike for children ages 7 to 14 wends through garden's microhabitats. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Trip ends at noon. Bring binoculars and pencil. Cosponsored by botanical garden, San Francisco Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon.

Pt. Reyes National Seashore

Marin County

Sunday, June 5

Leader: Bruce Mast

510.435.1371, Bmast@alumni.rice.edu

Meet at Drake's Beach at 9 a.m. Specific

destinations will depend on birds and weather, but our particular focus will be searching for vagrants. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress for the capricious coastal climate.

Strybing Arboretum

San Francisco

Sundays, June 5, July 3, and August 7

Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241, and Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

For this regular first Sunday of month half-day trip, meet at 8 a.m. at front gate of arboretum, Ninth Ave. and Lincoln Way. Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several microhabitats that attract a varied array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. All levels of birders welcome.

Tilden Regional Park

Berkeley

Tuesdays, June 7, July 12, and August 9

Leader: Bob Lewis

510.845.5001, rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at Nature Area parking lot. We will look for returning migrants such as warblers, vireos, Allen's Hummingbird, and Black-headed Grosbeak, as well as butterflies. Trip lasts 2 to 3 hours. Beginners welcome.

By bus: Take #67 at downtown Berkeley BART (departs 7:12 a.m. and 7:42 a.m.), which takes 12 minutes to arrive at Spruce/Grizzly Peak Blvd. intersection. From there it is a 10-minute walk downhill to Nature Area parking lot.

By car: Enter park from Canyon Dr. (where Spruce St. meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.) or Shasta Rd. (off Grizzly Peak Blvd.) in Berkeley, and follow the signs to Nature Area at north end of park.

Pelagic Trip: Monterey Bay

Sunday, June 12, and Friday, August 26

These pelagic trips into Monterey Bay are offered by Monterey Seabirds. Golden Gate

Audubon members receive a \$10 discount off regular price of \$80. Trips start at 7:30 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. For information, go to www.montereyseabirds.com.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, June 12

Leader: SF Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser, 415.561.7100 or 561.7104

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at foot of Hyde Street Pier (Hyde and Jefferson) for this two-hour beginners' bird walk. Discover birds next door to the urban environment. Dress in layers. Trip is wheelchair accessible.

Lake Merritt

Oakland

Saturdays, June 18, July 23, and August 20

Leader: Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. Focus will be on waterfowl and waterbirds of Lake Merritt. Beginners welcome.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins and walk into park on Perkins, or park in free lot at boat-house, 568 Bellevue. From parking lot, walk past the children's art center to far side of bird yard with freshwater ponds.

\$2.39 Per Gallon?

\$2.79 Per Gallon?

**How Much Did You Pay
for Gas Today?**

Golden Gate Audubon, a cutting-edge environmental organization, encourages all birders to share rides on our field trips. In this way, we cut down on the number of cars going on our trips and help reduce air pollution. So next time, plan ahead and open your car to additional riders. Contact the Field Trips Coordinator and she will put you in touch with other people who want to go on the same trip.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park Oakland

**Wednesdays, June 22, July 27, and
August 24**

Leaders: Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066;
Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9
p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com; Ruth Tobey,
ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Meet at 9:30 a.m. on lake side of Nature
Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. We'll
look around, then go down lake toward
Embarcadero or up path across street from
Nature Center to Children's Fairyland and
back through fenced garden. If you miss
us, we may still be in sight. The trip, which
ends at noon or before, will be on smooth
paths and lawns, with some mild slopes. For
directions, see trip above.

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Shasta and Lassen Counties

Friday–Sunday, June 24–26

Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy,
415.564.0074, email preferred:
murphsf@comcast.net

Join us on our annual family excursion to
Lassen. In past years, we have seen Willow,
Hammond's, and Dusky Flycatchers, Black
Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's
Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope
Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker,
Williamson's Sapsucker, and most of war-
blers and finches that breed in mountains.

On Friday morning, we will meet at
Manzanita Lake Campground store at 6:30
a.m., bird around lake for 2–3 hours, return
to camp for breakfast. We rendezvous again
at store at 10:30 a.m. for a 3-mile hike on
one of Lassen's trails. We may climb as
much as 700 feet. Wear sturdy shoes and
bring lunch and liquids. Sunscreen, hat,
mosquito repellent, and warm clothing may
also be necessary.

On Friday night, meet us at 7 p.m. to
watch wildlife on Hat Lake beaver pond.
From Manzanita Lake, drive south into
park for about 12 miles. Park in lot to left
just beyond hairpin turn at Hat Lake. Do
not slam car doors or make excessive noise
since that can scare wildlife. Bring mosquito
repellent, warm jacket, and flashlight.

On Saturday, campers will meet at store

at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Bunney
Falls, Fall River Valley, and Bannock Lake.
Those staying elsewhere can meet us at
around 8 a.m. at Vista Point about 12 miles
north of Lassen on Hwys. 44/89. Bring
lunch and liquids. This all-day excursion of
about 100 miles will include a midday break
of 2–3 hours to swim at Lake Britton, hike
trails, or view a spectacular waterfall. We
will have dinner at a restaurant.

On Sunday we will meet at store at 6:30
a.m., bird around the lake for 2–3 hours,
return for breakfast, then meet at 10:30 and
drive through park, making frequent stops
to bird. Trip ends after lunch at Summit
Lake Campground.

Stop at our campsite for further informa-
tion. We will have a campfire every evening
around 8 or 9 p.m. Bring your own chair and
cup. We will provide hot water for tea or
coffee. Check campground bulletin boards
or office at Hat Creek Resort for our poster
and campsite number, and any last-minute
changes in schedule.

Go north on I-5 to junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding.
Go east on Hwy. 44 to northwest entrance of
Lassen. Camping facilities are at Manzanita Lake.
Lodging is available about 15 miles north of park at
Hat Creek Resort, Old Station, 530.335.7121. Other
information can be obtained from park headquarters,
Mineral, CA 96063.

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Arrowhead Marsh Bilingual Family Trips

Oakland

**Fridays, July 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29,
August 5, 12, and 19**

Leader: Rene Urriola
510.938.8016, rene25@gmail.com

Meet at 10 a.m. in front of lookout structure
at Arrowhead Marsh. We'll restore critical
salt marsh habitat for shorebirds and the
endangered Clapper Rail. Participants will

also have a chance to watch birds, so bring
binoculars or use ours. Trip will be con-
ducted bilingually in Spanish and English.
All ages are welcome. Trip ends around
12:30 p.m. Students can receive commu-
nity service hours for these trips.

Take I-880 to Hegenberger exit, then go west on
Hegenberger to Doolittle Dr. Turn right on Doolittle,
then right onto Swan Way and left into MLK Jr.
Regional Shoreline Park. Drive to end for Arrowhead
Marsh parking lot.

Pelagic Trip: Tufted Puffins and Farallon Islands

Sunday, August 7

Leader: Alan Hopkins, 415.664.0983

Golden Gate Audubon and Shearwater
Journeys are offering a trip to see Tufted
Puffins and other alacids at Farallon Islands.
After visiting Farallons, weather permitting,
we will continue west to the Continental
Shelf to look for deep-water species such
as Black-footed Albatross and Blue Whale.
Participants travel on *Salty Lady*, which
departs from Sausalito at 7:30 a.m. and
returns about 8 hours later. Last year's trip
was outstanding (see December 2004 *Gull*),
with sightings of Cassin's Auklets, Pomarine
Jaeger, Buller's Shearwater, and Sabine's
Gull, along with Dall's Porpoise, Northern
Right Whale Dolphins, Humpback Whale,
and an eight-foot-long Leatherback Turtle.

This trip will surely fill early. Special
GGA member price is \$99; nonmembers
are welcome at the regular \$115 price (both
nonrefundable). To register, send a check
for each participant, noting if you are a GGA
member. Also include a phone number and
email address (if available) for each member
in your party and a self-addressed, stamped
envelope. Mail to Shearwater Journeys, PO
Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. For more
information, call trip leader.



Contact Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair,
at 510.654.5954 or susangroves@att.net:

- if you can share a ride or if you need a ride,
- if you have difficulty reaching a leader and
need information,
- if you have suggestions for trips, or
- if you are interested in leading a trip.

key



Carpool



Entrance fee
required



Biking trip

OBSERVATIONS

April 1-30, 2005

Bruce Mast



Despite the continued cold and rainy weather, spring migration got under way in earnest this month. True rarities were few but the expected migrants generated excitement aplenty and the wildflower bonanza was an added bonus to those who ventured afield.

Loons to Ducks

Crissy Fields (SF) and Rodeo Lagoon (MRN) continued to host Red-necked Grebes through early April. The Rodeo bird was last reported on the 23rd (WL). Elsewhere, a Red-necked visited Pigeon Point, SM, on the 2nd (RST, AE, RF) and 2 more stopped at Campbell Cove, Bodega Bay, SON, on the 16th (RLc). Northwestern winds periodically pushed loons and other pelagic migrants shoreward. Seawatches from Pigeon Point ID'd a Northern Fulmar on the 4th and up to 12 Sooty Shearwaters Apr. 4-9 (RST). A Brandt's Cormorant made a rare foray into the bay near Steinberger Slough in Redwood Shores, SM, Apr. 5-6 (RST).

A Eurasian Green-winged Teal remained at Pescadero Marsh on the 14th (RST) and a possible Eurasian female was reported at the Albany Mudflats, ALA, on the 4th (KA). A couple Harlequin Ducks stuck around at the Berkeley Pier, ALA, through the 10th (BoD; CL) and another made an appearance on the 10th at Heron's Head Park, SF (HR). A female Long-tailed Duck joined the Dumbarton Bridge parade on the 10th (RST). Three more were tallied off the Berkeley Pier around the same time (JM; CL, BoD) and a fifth showed up at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON, on the 15th (AW).

Raptors to Alcids

The Common Black-Hawk that wintered near Stockton, SJ, and then drifted over to Hawk Hill, MRN, has apparently worked its way up the coast, where it was reported near Guisti and Marabel Rds. in Forrestville, SON, on the 16th (LC). The most remark-

able hawk sighting this month was a **Gray Hawk** (*Asturina nitida*), observed circling the parade grounds over Fort Baker, MRN, on the 25th (RS). If accepted, this would be a first state record for Gray Hawk in CA. A Gray Hawk was previously reported from Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, in 1984 but the ID was rejected as inconclusive. The last 2 weeks of April, migrating Swainsons Hawks caught the eye of at least 4 Bay Area birders (KMK, FA, JM, LC; mob).



Franklin's Gull.

Joyce Gross

A rare Pacific Golden-Plover stopped in at Bayfront Park in Menlo Park, SM, on the 29th (RF). The 2nd Solitary Sandpiper of the season was reported Apr. 19 at Smiths Creek Fire Station, SCL (PK, RK, FV, BRe). Red Knots also passed through the region between the 7th and 26th, with the high count of 38 coming from Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA (RSc; mob). Beginning Apr. 8, migrating Red-necked Phalaropes made stop-overs at marshes and salt-ponds in ALA, MRN, SF, SCL, and SCL.

An Apr. 30 seawatch from Pigeon Point, SM, noted both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers (RST, AE). The first Franklin's Gull of the season was observed on the 7th at Pescadero Marsh, SM (LG, JeP). A Franklin's visited L. Merced, SF, on the 23rd (JM) and another lingered at L. Merritt beginning the 28th (EDB; mob). Between the 15th and 24th, fly-over Franklins were

reported at Pigeon Point, SM (RST; GrH, DS, FT); Duboce Park, SF (BF); and Half Moon Bay, SM (AJ). Migrating Bonaparte's Gulls were numerous throughout the month, with the high count coming Apr. 9-10 at the Dumbarton Bridge, SM, where 1800-2000 Bonaparte's were attracted to the hatching brine shrimp in the salt ponds (KO; RST). A Glaucous Gull made these a watch list at Pigeon Point on the 14th (RST) and another was noted 2 days later at Bodega Bay, SON (RLc). A Common Tern in alternate plumage made a foray over bay waters on the 19th, when it was seen flying north past the Coyote Pt. Marina, SM (RST). Up to 5 Ancient Murrelets were seen migrating north past Pigeon Point Apr. 2-4 (RST, AE, RF).

Doves to Thrashers

Since the 1980s, Eurasian Collared-Doves have been expanding their range from FL, reaching AZ and the SE CA deserts around 2002. April produced evidence of continued range expansion into northern CA. Beginning the 22nd, 1-2 Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported in the vicinity of Lincoln Park, Sutro Heights Park, and the Presidio, SF (HC, MU, PS). On the 30th, 2 doves were observed at Muir Beach, MRN (DMK) and 2 more were found in Half Moon Bay, SM (AJ). A White-winged Dove also made the trip north, turning up at Drake's Cove, PRNS, MRN, on the 23rd (JWi).

An owl prowled at Bothe Napa Valley State Park, NAP, discovered a Barred Owl on the 17th (BG, HH, RL) and documented 2 Spotted Owls the next night (BG, TW). One or more Long-eared Owls were heard calling at Pescadero Creek County Park, SM, on the 5th (BM) and a Long-eared apparently returned to Ed Levin County Park, SCL, on the 23rd, where it hadn't been seen since Feb. 22 (mob). Two Lesser Nighthawks graced the evening sky over Stevens Creek Marsh in Mountain View, SCL, on the 26th (SR).

Vaux's Swift migration kicked into full gear this month, with 100s reported passing over Sutro Heights Park on the 23rd (MU). Migrating Calliope Hummingbirds mostly followed the Diablo Range north. Calliopes stopped to smell the roses at Del Valle Res., ALA, on the 16th (ESc); at Mitchell Cyn.,

BACKYARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich



The first characteristic that comes to mind when you think of birds is flight. And yet a number of birds are virtually flightless. In reality, many birds are as well adapted to life on the ground or in the water as they are to life in the air. The exception is the swift family, whose members spend almost their entire lives in the air. Birds such as gulls are well adapted to all three forms of locomotion. Other birds, such as albatross and vultures, are powerful fliers under optimum conditions but are unable to get off the ground under other circumstances. Some waterbirds, such as grebes, fly well enough but have a tough time taking off from the water. Ground dwellers like grouse and quail prefer to use camouflage and the tactic of pretending to be wounded before bursting into the air. Roadrunners would rather run for their lives than fly, although they glide very well.

The first known bird, *Archaeopteryx*, was a poor flyer that basically glided from tree to tree. About 70 million years ago, another bird evolved. *Hesperornis*, built like a loon, had virtually no external wings and spent most of its time under or on the water, while strong-flying reptiles flapped and soared overhead. Millions of years later, we still have birds that resemble these ancient relatives.

Because they cannot use flight as a means of escape, purely flightless birds have developed protective adaptations. One adaptation, developed centuries ago, was sheer size. The Elephant Bird of Madagascar was thought to have weighed a half ton (no wonder it couldn't fly), and the giant Moas of Australia were up to 13 feet tall. Those birds could intimidate most predators, exclusive of gun-bearing men. Sadly they are now extinct. Today's flightless birds include the ratites (the Ostrich, Emu, Cassowary, and rheas, which are famous in crossword puzzles). All of them are large birds.

Why should birds become flightless? One reason is that flight is an immensely

expensive activity in terms of energy. A bird must obtain much greater amounts of food in order to fly than if it remains on the ground. A bird with smaller flight muscles to maintain would have a better chance of survival during times of food shortages. To compensate, very large birds gave up flight, and some, such as Ostriches, developed long, strong legs.

Then there are the amazing penguins.



Ostrich.

They did not lose the power of flight but adapted it to swimming. Birds have a keel or breastbone to which flight (pectoral) muscles are attached. Penguins have this same keel along with flight muscles, but they use their wings as flippers to fly through the water with ease. Ostriches, on the other hand, have no keel or flight muscles and use their wings to perform courtship dances, to cool off, and to shield their eggs from the harsh sun. To protect themselves, they have extremely keen eyesight for detecting predators and can deliver powerful kicks (and painful blows) from their strong legs.

Most flightless birds are found on isolated islands or lakes. This puts them at great risk, as humans and their pets (dogs and cats),

farm animals (goats, pigs, and sheep), and the ubiquitous introduced rats intrude on their idyllic lives. The birds' eggs are eaten or trampled. Because they do not fly, the birds cannot escape firearms. It would seem they are doomed to extinction. Those that do survive are severely threatened. Luckily, people are becoming more aware of the need to protect these threatened species.

The only passerine (songbird) suspected of being flightless was discovered in 1894 in New Zealand. The Stephen Island Wren reputedly ran around on the ground like a mouse, but became extinct before it could be studied. (I've always likened our Bewick's Wren to a mouse as it scurries to hide in the shrubs.) The bird's wing structure suggests that it may have been capable of weak flight. Other species that include flightless members are the Kiwi, some rails, a grebe on a lake in the Andes, a steamer duck, and a subspecies of brown teal on the Auckland Islands, the Galapagos cormorant, and the Kakapo (a New Zealand owl-parrot), all of which are rather rare. There are no living flightless species in North America.

Flight is a wondrous feat, but it is interesting to observe how those birds that cannot fly have developed amazing ways of adapting to meet their needs.

Trail Days at Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

For two days in June, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge will be open for visitors to take a three-mile self-guided hike across the refuge's grasslands and along its wetlands. A wildlife-viewing platform overlooks the seasonal wetlands. This is a great time of year to enjoy the abundance of seasonal migratory birds of the Central Valley. Trail Days, which are free, will be held on Saturday, June 11, beginning at 7:30 a.m., and on Saturday, June 25, beginning at 9 a.m. A docent-guided walk starts at 9 a.m. on June 11 and 10 a.m. on June 25. For details and directions, go to www.fws.gov/pacific/stonelakes.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bird Box Etiquette

The Northern California Bird Box is among Golden Gate Audubon's most popular services. Due to the popularity of the box, users calling the number (415) 681-7422 sometimes have difficulty getting through in order to report birds or listen to the reports. These guidelines for reporting birds will make the box more efficient for everyone.

First, before you report a bird, consider if it is a bird someone else will travel to see. A good way to evaluate this is to check *Birds of Northern California, An Annotated Field List*, by McCaskie, De Benedictis, Erickson, and Morlan, available from the Nature Store at the GGA office. The book has bar-graphs for all the species expected in the area. Any bird with a dashed or dotted bar-graph is probably worth reporting. Species marked with a green dot in our area of the maps in

the *Sibley Field Guide to Birds* are worth reporting as well.

When you call the Bird Box to make a report, follow this procedure:

1. Give your name, save the names of other observers for later in your report.
2. List the species you are reporting. Begin with the species of greatest interest.
3. Give the county where the bird was seen, followed by the specific place.
4. Report the hour you saw the bird and the length of your observation. You do not need to include the date, which will automatically be reported.
5. If necessary, you may give a more detailed narrative after the previous information. Things you may want to report are more exact details on the location of the bird, other observers who saw the bird, and the bird's

plumage characteristics or behavior.

6. When you are finished, remember to hit the pound key to listen to your message. As you listen, make sure the call is clear and that the information given is what you really meant to say.

You may find it helpful to make an outline of the information to convey before you call. Remember that a good report lets the listener know at the beginning whether or not to skip to the next report. An ineffective report rambles on and forces the listener to hear details, wanted or not, before the most important information is given. This causes each listener to spend more time on the phone and prevents others from hearing the reports or making new reports.

A little planning and consideration will make the Bird Box more rewarding for both reporters and listeners.

Are You a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon?

Did you know Golden Gate Audubon, a chapter of National Audubon Society (NAS), is an independent organization with its own separate budget? We receive less than \$3 of your \$20-plus NAS membership—which does not begin to cover the cost of producing the *Gull*, managing our extensive conservation and environmental education programs in San Francisco and the East Bay, and offering field trips, classes, and monthly slide-lectures. If you join Golden Gate Audubon *directly* you will have the satisfaction of knowing that 100 percent of your Supporting Membership helps to support our *local* programs.

PLEASE BECOME A GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SUPPORTING MEMBER TODAY!

Please select a membership level:

- ☐ Student \$20
- ☐ Brown Pelican (Individual) \$25
- ☐ California Quail (Family) \$40
- ☐ Clapper Rail \$100–199
- ☐ Least Tern \$200–499
- ☐ Peregrine Falcon \$500–999
- ☐ Golden Eagle \$1,000 and above

☐ My check, payable to **Golden Gate Audubon Society**, is enclosed.

☐ Please charge my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. _____ (mm/yy)

Name as it appears on card _____

Signature _____

☐ I would also like to include an additional donation to support Golden Gate Audubon's conservation, education and birding programs.

Membership \$ _____

Additional Donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Your contributions to Golden Gate Audubon are fully tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Thank you for becoming a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon!

☐ Please do not share my name with any other organization.

Pelagic Trips for Golden Gate Audubon Members

If you are not already a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you will want to become one to take advantage of this special offer (see page 11 for membership form). GGA and Shearwater Journeys have teamed up to provide three all-day pelagic trips at great savings to members. Seabirds and whales echange with the seasons and locales. With this package, you have an extraordinary opportunity to visit the best Northern California pelagic sites at peak seasons—for an unprecedented low cost. The regular price of all three trips is \$440. GGA Supporting Members pay only \$360, a total savings of \$80, making Supporting Membership a worthwhile investment.

To register, send a check to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister CA 95024, in the amount of \$270 for the Fort Bragg and Cordell Bank trips or \$360 for all three trips (all are nonrefundable). You may also sign up for the trips individually, but must pay the regular prIEEE, not the GGA Supporting Member discounted price. Note the dates of

your trips and if you are a GGA Supporting Member. Also include phone number and email address (if available) for each member of your party and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. A small fuel surcharge may be required the day of the trip. More trip details will be mailed upon payment. For additional information, contact the leader of the trips, Alan Hopkins, at 415.664.0983.

Noyo Sea Canyon

Sunday, August 14

Cordell Bank Marine Sanctuary,

Sunday, September 25

Regular price: \$320 for both trips, or \$160 each

GGA member price: \$270 for both trips

The trip to Noyo Sea Canyon departs from Fort Bragg at 7 a.m. Large groups of albatross are seen just offshore. Rarities on past trips have included Shy Albatross, Dark-rumped Petrel, Streaked Shearwater, and Brown Booby. For those interested in spending the weekend, the town of Fort Bragg offers excel-

lent birding at MacKerriher and Russian Gulch State Parks. The trip to Cordell Bank Marine Sanetuary departs from Bodega Bay at 6:30 a.m. We expect to see an abundanee of marine life, including Humpbaek Whale and dolphins. Birds include Xantus's and Craveri's Murrelets, South Polar Skua, and Flesh-footed Shearwater, and oceasionally a rarity (see Deeember 2004 *Gull*).

Monterey Bay Bonus Trip

Saturday, October 8

Regular price: \$120

GGA member price: \$90 as part of package only

Monterey Bay is the best-known pelagic birding destination on the West Coast. Along with shearwaters and auklets, we will look for large flocks of Ashy and Blaek Storm-Petrels, and for Wilson's and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels. We will also be alert for Black-vented Shearwater and other species that we are not likely to see on the previous trips. Trip departs from Monterey Harbor at 7 a.m.

**WELCOME
NEW
MEMBERS!**

The GULL is the official newsletter of Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The GULL*, a 10 percent discount on all items purchased at our nature store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

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